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Re-embodying Human Consciousness in the Earth

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Abstract: For the last 20,000 years or so the dominant mode of human consciousness has been one that divides reality into subjects and objects, and focuses on human desires and needs. This anthropocentric mode of consciousness has invented religions, built civilizations, amassed knowledge, and developed technology and science. It has also disembodied us from the Earth and led to the Anthropocene Era. Still with us is another mode of human consciousness that arguably once existed in a balance with the anthropocentric mode during our long hunter-gatherer, Paleolithic sojourn. This holistic, integrative mode of consciousness experiences the Earth as a mother, and responds to its creatures, plants, rocks, waters, and other anthropocentrically labeled “inanimate” forms, as close relations. This Earth-centered mode of consciousness still functions in indigenous cultures, and it has been implicitly preserved by artists through their metaphorical thinking. The two modalities of consciousness are equally part of the evolved capacity of the human mind. Over time the anthropocentric mode of consciousness became a hegemonic force, and the Earth-embodied was pushed aside.

Relying principally on our anthropocentric mode of mind to solve the climate crisis — to manage nature — risks introducing new technologies that will generate new problems. Reawakening our Earth-embodied mode of consciousness would allow us to once again listen deeply to the Earth. This mode could holistically guide our use of knowledge and technology as we seek to find a new balance between ourselves and the other forces and life forms that shape the planet. Reawakening the Earth-embodied consciousness may not be as difficult as it seems. One approach suggested here is “creative animism.” A person becomes a creative animist by noticing and experiencing the forms of nature (nature’s “objects” in anthropocentric terms) as intensely alive, as both similar to and different from us, and as intimately related to us.

Keywords: *consciousness, brain, anthropocentric, embodiment, holistic, indigenous, animism, art, pictograph, science, technology, transpersonal*

A Mode at the Margins

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Everything is viewed as having energy and its own unique intelligence and creative process, not only obviously animate entities, such as plants, animals, and microorganisms, but also rocks, mountains, rivers, and places large and small. Everything in nature has something to teach humans. This is the Indigenous view of 'animism,' the anthropologically defined, superficially understood, and ethnocentrically biased term used to categorize the Indigenous way of knowing the world.

— Gregory Cajete (2000)

In the last several thousand years humanity has been steadily expanding a mode of consciousness that I will call here “the anthropocentric mode,” though the term is not precise. This mode has produced the current Anthropocene Era in which humans have become the cause of the sixth great mass extinction in the planet’s history.

It has fallen to the 21st century generations of our species to come to grips with the lethal dysfunctions of this anthropocentric mode of consciousness and to realize that it has locked us like an iron mask into experiencing the Earth in terms of our own narrow self-interest rather than *experiencing the Earth in its own terms*. Right now, rather than listening to the Earth, we are studying and tinkering with the Earth — thinking mainly of ourselves.

Putting this another way: the anthropocentric mode of consciousness has *disembodied* us from the Earth to the extent that most human beings have lost anything like the emotion (very different from the idea) that the Earth “is our mother,” that its creatures — including its trees, stones, waters, and even those creatures we consider pests — are our sisters and brothers.

The concept embodiment refers to the natural born capacity to know that your body and its parts are *you*. Physically and mentally, embodiment is crucial to our survival.

Ananthaswamy (2015) interviews a man who arranged to have his leg amputated because he felt with absolute certainty that it was not a part of his body. His leg felt disembodied from him. Embodiment means your consciousness and your physical body fit together in such a way that you know they are you: your arm, your pain, your thoughts, and your movement on the tennis court.

To be embodied in the Earth means to experience at a vital level of your being that you are embedded in your natural surroundings, including its animals and trees, its stones, its lakes.

By contrast, to be disembodied from the Earth, as we now are, means to experience nature as assemblages of animate and inanimate objects essentially exterior to us—objects and systems that need to be eliminated or modified as our populous species swarms about, blighting the planet to satisfy our invented needs.

Absent a strong sense of embodiment in the Earth, our *fixes* and responses to the planetary climate crisis risk making our disembodiment more pathological than it already is. Relying on technology to solve environmental problems will inevitably create new problems that call for new technologies. These, in turn, will push us physically and psychically increasingly further away from the natural world that we are trying to save.

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Also caught in the embodiment problem are noble efforts that call upon us to cease acting out the story we have created about ourselves as the dominant masters of Earth and to adopt instead a new *story* that emphasizes our participation in the Earth's web of life. This proposed new story articulates a valuable new idea (and in the past I have contributed to this web of life idea), but our current mode of consciousness is utterly crammed to the bursting point with ideas. They circulate in our heads and constantly run aground against each other. Ideas are the principal anthropocentric way of constructing and making sense of reality.

It may sound heretical or nonsensical to say, but, in an important sense, ideas and the way we reify them are what separate us most from each other and from the Earth. Artists have long understood the limitation of ideas in grasping reality, and the literature by creators on creativity is full of this understanding. Conrad (1897) wrote that ideas “speak authoritatively to our common-sense, to our intelligence... to our credulity;” however, “It is otherwise with the artist.” Though artists make use of ideas in their work, they do so in ways that subvert and transcend the ideas (through irony, metaphor, paradox, and ambiguity, for example) to arrive at a non-ideational, sensorial, perceptual and unifying experience that lies underneath: an experience that Virginia Woolf called “being” and that other artists have called *presence* or *spirit*.

In this essay, I am suggesting that there is readily available to us another mode of consciousness which allows us to feel emotionally and physically embodied in the Earth, to feel that the Earth is us and that we are indivisible from its body.

My suggestion has roots in my experiences as a boy growing up in suburbia. The little scrap of woodland near our house seemed the only spot of refuge and sanity I could find from the clamorous preoccupations of my young life — school, sports, status, acceptance and rejection, the fretful concerns about my future and my identity — all preoccupations that constituted *reality* for me, and yet seemed so artificial and unreal. The unruly woods with its gnarled trees, its newts and snakes, birds rustling in the dry leaves, small streams, and old ice-age boulders spotted with plush moss seemed to feed my sense of life in ways I still cannot fathom.

Over the years I have talked to many people who as children had similar experiences and feelings about encounters with what nature they found along the margins of their urbanized civilized world. One man told me his boyhood encounters with nature were confined to a drainage ditch populated by frogs. He loved to go there.

Many of us grew to experience nature, not in terms of our deepest sense of life, but as a marginal and adjunct domain, refreshing spots of nature found amid the *real* (anthropocentric) reality of earning a living, getting ahead, forming a self image, defending an identity, wrestling with the ethical precepts of one's religion or philosophies, assimilating culture, and acquiring the complex knowledge necessary for survival in the current technological world.

The Anthropocentric Mode

What I am calling the anthropocentric mode of human consciousness has existed at least as far back as the Old Testament when people

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imagined they were invited by their God to take dominion over the Earth. The anthropocentric mode of consciousness laid the foundation stones for what we term civilization, the concentrated organization of our self-centered concerns and preoccupations as a species. Anthropologists have traced the rising hegemony of this anthropocentric consciousness back even further. It is estimated that around 20,000 years ago a gradual but dramatic change took place in human experience. At this time, the previous 70,000-year-long foraging lifestyle was yielding to Neolithic larger-scale communities, agriculture, animal husbandry, food storage, the evolution of controlling elites — and civilization itself. Along with these changes came the rise to dominance of our anthropocentric mode of consciousness — the very one now alienating us from nature. This mode of consciousness has expanded through centuries of complex, hierarchical societies, swelling into a tidal wave in the 18th century with the flourishing of science, industry, mass cultures, and perpetual wars that have swept up almost the entire natural world and our Earth-embodied awareness in their path.

Though (as I will argue below) the Earth-embodied awareness remains available to us, it has been suppressed. We have become so deeply immersed in the presuppositions and schema of this totalizing mode of consciousness that it appears to us to be the inevitable byproduct of some human nature accumulated in our psyches by evolution. The schema of anthropocentric consciousness dictates that the reality detected by our senses seems inevitably a collection of separate fragments, resources, and objects for us to gain knowledge from and control over,

whether through magic or technology. From our high rung on the great chain of being, we easily presume that our anthropocentric consciousness must also have been the consciousness of our species' earliest members as they cleverly made tools and plotted collective strategies for hunting animals. In the context of the anthropocentric mindset, the entire Earth itself has become a complex object to be exploited, analyzed, repaired, re-engineered, and cultivated for our benefit.

The current biogenetic revolution seems an inevitable consequence of our anthropocentric schema: modifying the DNA of a goat with the gene of a spider in order to produce an industrial fiber; inserting the gene of an Arctic fish into potatoes to make them more frost-resistant; genetically altering animals to manufacture medicines, new human body parts, and other commodities. Already we have genetically induced extra musculature for police dogs, hornless cattle for farmers, and micro pigs for the exotic pet market. Robotics and artificial intelligence envision our coming ability to download a person's consciousness onto a hard drive or share one's thoughts like digital files. Nanotechnology advances quickly to strip matter down to its building blocks, and then reconfigure the blocks into tiny machines inserted into our bodies or into soil, air, and water where they will transform what the ancients regarded as the Earth's basic elements into new artificial materials under our control. The Earth, and all its creatures, are fast being converted into our inventions, with patents attached. Meanwhile, our obsessive activities extirpate an estimated 100 species of archaic *real* creatures every day.

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Like a monster amoeba in a horror film, the anthropocentric mindset seems poised to engulf everything. Consider how the animals that provide our food have been reduced to packages in the supermarket, making the real creatures seem abstract and invisible. Harari (2015) says in his book *Sapiens, a Brief History of Humankind*:

Around the time that *Homo sapiens* was elevated to divine status by humanist religions, farm animals stopped being viewed as living creatures that could feel pain and distress, and instead came to be treated as machines. Today these animals are often mass-produced in factory-like facilities, their bodies shaped in accordance with industrial needs... Egg-laying hens, for example... feel strong urges to scout their environment, forage and peck around, determine social hierarchies, build nests and groom themselves. But the egg industry often locks the hens inside tiny coops... Then hens receive sufficient food, but ...the cage is so small that hens are often unable even to flap their wings or stand fully erect... [In chicken hatcheries] male chicks and imperfect female chicks are picked off the conveyor belt and then asphyxiated in gas chambers, dropped into automatic shredders or simply thrown into the rubbish, where they are crushed to death...(p. 142)

Anthropocentric consciousness — an extremely violent mode of consciousness it seems — is entwined in our technology, in our powers of reason, in our sense of self, and in our ideas about society, economics, and death

(the natural parameter that scientists hope soon to significantly delay or eliminate). It haunts our dreams. In his May 24, 2015, encyclical letter, *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis accurately observes this mindset and its activities as a “reductionism which affects every aspect of human and social life.” He notes how the anthropocentric consciousness I am describing gave rise to what he calls a “technological paradigm” that now predominates:

This paradigm exalts the concept of a subject who, using logical and rational procedures, progressively approaches and gains control over an external object. This subject makes every effort to establish the scientific and experimental method, which in itself is already a technique of possession, mastery and transformation. It is as if the subject were to find itself in the presence of something formless, completely open to manipulation. *Men and women have constantly intervened in nature, but for a long time this meant being in tune with and respecting the possibilities offered by the things themselves. It was a matter of receiving what nature itself allowed, as if from its own hand.* [emphasis added] Now, by contrast, we are the ones to lay our hands on things, attempting to extract everything possible from them while frequently ignoring or forgetting the reality in front of us. Human beings and material objects no longer extend a friendly hand to one another; the relationship has become confrontational. This has made it easy to accept the idea of infinite or unlimited growth, which

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proves so attractive to economists, financiers and experts in technology. It is based on the lie that there is an infinite supply of the earth's goods, and this leads to the planet being squeezed dry beyond every limit.

Advancing the anthropocentric perspective of ourselves as a separate, especially endowed biological object (subject), we have lost contact with the Earth and created the Anthropocene Era that writer and climate activist McKibben dubbed "the end of nature." Another nature writer, Macfarlane (2015), observes that even the idea of an "Anthropocene Era" itself is a product of the anthropocentric way of thinking, "There are good reasons to be wary of the idea of the Anthropocene. Most obviously, it speaks of the species-hubris that is the source of so many of our current problems."

The environmental movement itself is inevitably ensnared in the thrall of the objectifying anthropocentric mindset that divides us from the Earth. Our interest in green and sustainable technology, our interest in the concept of the Earth as a living being or Gaia, is infected at every turn by hidden anthropocentric assumptions. The environmental movement makes its argument in terms of intellectual ideas or utilitarian solutions. Our focus on renewable resources, cost-benefit analyses, and sustainability seems practical and necessary, to be sure, but it takes place in a context where we experience ourselves as disembodied from the planet we live on, fighting to retain our footing on a ground that we are homogenizing into quicksand. We have gone from dominating nature to managing (or micromanaging) nature, and the anthropocentric mindset

retains its hegemony. Even the more radical Deep Ecology movement rests on an assumption that humans are essentially separate. Seeing us as perhaps equal, but not superior to other creatures, the movement calls for us to stop lording ourselves over nature and leave it alone. Good advice, but the Deep Ecology rebellion against anthropocentrism nevertheless retains the presupposition that nature — including other creatures, inanimate objects and forces — are *things* that we can intentionally stand apart from — a presumption that is a cornerstone of the anthropocentric mode of mind.

Recovering an Earth-Embodied Mode of Consciousness

We know that there was a time — and in some places still is a time — when human beings living in relatively small communities felt integral with the Earth. In a fundamental respect the shape of their daily consciousness was, and still is, astonishingly different from ours, even though it emerges from the same underlying foundations of consciousness as ours. The big difference is that, in their various traditions, the peoples guided by this Earth-embodied shape of consciousness felt (and feel) the Earth not as an external object but as their *mother*; their blood. They honor the plants and animals that nourish them. They feel that what they take from the Earth is by sacrifice and a blessing from other beings and are sparing in the taking. Though the professors of our mass industrial society have long denigrated these traditional peoples as savages, primitives, subsistence societies, or tribal groups, uneducated people holding magical and supernatural beliefs and superstitions, we are only beginning to

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recognize our own terrible biases in such characterizations.

Certainly not all traditional peoples have lived with this Earth-embodied consciousness of nature, but many have, and still do. They show their integration and respect for other beings, and also for what to us is the inanimate world. When the Koghi people of northern Colombia extract gold from the earth, they shape the gold into figurines returned to the earth when a community member dies. Traditional people like the Koghi offer a living proof that human consciousness can *experience* the Earth as its womb, can *experience* other beings and even stones and clouds as their close relations. Parry (2015) writes that “indigenous peoples have never accepted the idea that human beings are separate from nature. As a result, they retain a wider window of consciousness as their norm.” (p. 14) When a tree is sawn down, they can feel its pain as their own. Traditional peoples have much to teach us about an embodied understanding and deep affection for the natural world we are all embedded in, though for the most part we do not listen, or more accurately we do not *feel* what they feel.



Figure 1. *The human animal.*

The difference between the two modes of consciousness I am discussing here might be dramatized by considering the following: Juxtapose in your mind an animal-human chimera made by a Paleolithic human (Figure 1) and an actual chimera like those now being produced in bioengineering laboratories. We cannot know for sure, of course, but it seems plausible that the Paleolithic artist who made the 40,000-year-old “Lion Man (or Woman) of Hohlenstein-Stadel” fashioned this chimera as an act of reverence and wonder for the unity and mystery of life, in addition to whatever else might have been at play in the mythology of the artist’s particular community. Compare this attitude of wonder and reverence to the attitude we would have toward the 21st century *actual* chimera lab rat that has been genetically modified to grow a replacement human ear on its back. (Harari, 2015)⁷

Again, without some form of an Earth-embodied consciousness — which is clearly available because we know peoples whose minds are steeped in it — our technological and managerial fixes for our deteriorating environment may go horribly wrong. Even with the best of intentions we will invent new destruction and new alienation. Think of genetic manipulation, artificial intelligence, geo-engineering. Our hubris about our ability to control nature’s parts will defeat us. It is defeating us now. The anthropocentric shape of thought and language that understands reality as collections of material fragments, shatters our minds with ideas.⁸ How can this fragmented mindset make appropriate decisions about restoring or participating in the balance of an Earth if every *thing* on the planet is in fact inseparable from everything else? Obviously we think it can, but what if

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we are just fooling ourselves? For us, alas, the interconnectivity of the planet is just another one of our anthropocentric ideas.

What I am saying here is not anti-science or anti-technology. Science/technology and an Earth-embodied consciousness are definitely not incompatible. But a very different reality emerges when the Earth-embodied cast of mind is allowed to take precedence so that it guides the technology. This prehistoric cast of mind has been described by historian Berman (2000) in his book *Wandering God* as one of living in the “paradox” between self and Other, inside and outside: embracing simultaneously both inherent separation and inherent unity. This involves, Berman writes, “a kind of openness toward experience” (p. 14) or “a kind of subjective radiance, which is what (I believe) we are for the most part seeing on the walls of Lascaux.” (p. 43) Berman says, “I would argue, hunter-gatherer ‘religion’ was for the most part nothing more complicated than the ‘magic’ of everyday life.” (p. 14) ⁹ For most of our species’ prehistory on this planet, Berman argues, this was the orientation of human consciousness.

I believe the mindset Berman alludes to is still down there, inside us somewhere, imprinted in our heart and brain cells.

But let me be clear. The distinction I am trying to make between the two forms of consciousness is not merely an intellectual one. An Earth-embodied consciousness is a consciousness that *experiences itself as* co-extensive with, but not dominant over, rocks, trees, winds, insects, the movement of clouds, and the songs of birds, along with past human beings and future generations. Berman’s idea of the Paleolithic consciousness of paradox

seems to me related to a more general sense about what might be regarded as the primal paradox of our existential condition. That condition situates each of us in a constant and irresolvable tension between an individual identity as a solitary self separate from all else and an experience of ourselves, as beings that are absolutely inseparable from the natural world. Our lives turn and return within the existential circuit of this primal paradox.¹⁰

It seems reasonable to imagine that both modes of consciousness I am discussing here were inherent in the early evolution of human consciousness: the anthropocentric tool-making survival mode that viewed nature as resources for survival; the Earth-embodied mode that recognized a kinship with all things. One mode looked from the perspective of separation, the other mode looked from the perspective of unity: two perspectives making us into a single existential coin. These two modes once existed, I believe, in a dynamic balancing tension, as they still do in works of art.¹¹ In fact, Native-American cultures speak eloquently and extensively about a dynamic balance requiring constant attention to the reciprocity between our differences from other people and other things and our mutual identity with them. In Navaho the balance is called *hozo*, a central tenant of the Diné worldview.

The problem is that as historical time went on, the anthropocentric mode was amplified during the creation of civilization and large-scale metaphysical religions, and at this point it has all but blotted out the Earth-embodied mode, leaving us, as the Hopi have observed, living *koyaanisqatsi*, “a life out of balance.”¹²

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At this late date, can we reawaken some modicum of this Earth-embodied consciousness lingering deep in our brains, not in the same way as small hunter-gatherer bands did in the past, but in similar or analogous ways that could work within the context of our global mass societies, and that would moderate our all consuming anthropocentric patterns of thought? The Earth-embodied consciousness I am talking about is not something exalted or rarefied. It's not a higher, lower, or more fundamental mode of consciousness. It does not require individual or collective enlightenment, belief in a particular spiritual cosmology, the operation of an eschatology, or exercise of some esoteric practice. It is available everywhere nature is (which is everywhere), if we only have the time and affection for life to look. I propose that this mode of consciousness is part of the common creative heritage of human consciousness as it evolved in the context of the natural world. It is an ability related to our inclinations as children to sing and dance, write poetry, and draw.

I have many friends who have experienced an Earth-embodied consciousness. In my activity as a landscape photographer, and writer, I would claim to have experienced it almost daily myself. Again, it's not a grand accomplishment or transformation that I am claiming here, though I think it could be an important state if experienced by many others. Certainly it has been important to me personally. My wife has been my long-time guide to this state. What is it? Before elaborating what I mean about recovering, reinventing or reimagining this prehistoric Earth-embodied state of mind, I would like to recount a bit of a trip I took with an old friend to the canyons of Southern Utah.

The Shamans of Black Dragon Canyon

According to anthropologists, a pre-historical group called the Barrier Canyon people left pictographs (paintings) on some 400 canyon walls in the area around Grand Canyon, Canyonlands National Park, and the San Rafael Swell on the Colorado Plateau. Not much is known about the Barrier Canyon people. By some anthropological estimates (Kelen & Sucec, 1996) they lived anywhere from 2,000 to 8,000 years ago, an archaic people who presumably inhabited the area before the Anasazi and Fremont groups that made the civilizations of Mesa Verde and Chaco. The haunting Barrier Canyon images painted in red ochre on sand-colored and cinnamon-tinted canyon stone suggest a shamanistic people, long vanished from time, a people of spirit and Earth.

My old friend and fellow photographer, Joe Cantrell, and I spent a few morning hours in a small canyon outside of Green River, Utah. Figure 2 is a pair of the Barrier Canyon images painted on the northwest wall of the canyon. This particular pair of figures had a strong emotional impact on me.¹³



Figure 2. Is the creature on the right a shaman's soul or an animal companion?

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Below are what the figures looked like on the section of wall to the left of the shaman and his familiar.



Figure 3. Shamans or space aliens?



Figure 4. The chalk lines were reportedly added many decades ago by archeologists.

Without presuming to know anything about what these images really meant for their creators, I felt that somewhere beyond the anthropocentric superficialities that crowd my 21st century brain I recognized them. Somewhere in the dim reaches of my consciousness I felt intimately related to them. Eerily alive, they filled me with a sense of wonder and mystery. They recalled my boyhood experiences of nature. It seemed ironically fitting that we had found them on the Colorado Plateau and its high desert, in the prehistoric silence of that place with its exposed layers of time eroded into fantastic shapes: colored pinnacles, exotic pavilions, and palisades resembling processions of alien divinities — like a place left by the ruins of ancient dream-like civilizations that had flourished long ago and then passed away.

After examining the images in daylight, we understood we would have to return to the canyon at night.

I did not know what to expect from Black Dragon Canyon in the darkness. With the stars sliding overhead as they had done for millions of years, would I have some occult or searing encounter with the spirits that had made the images? Pure fantasy, of course, but the images had appealed enough to me to believe that any supernatural thing was possible. The empty eyes in one masked figure (Figure 4) had seemed in full sunlight to be taking me to some profound emptiness from which these figures had materialized. Then there was the riveting shaman and his familiar. Frankly, I welcomed an assault on my cultivated normality as much as I feared it. I could anticipate it (Carlos Castaneda style) like an encounter with my own death.

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With dusk fast fading, Joe drove in as far as he could on the gnarly jeep road into the canyon and parked. After assembling my equipment, with my small headlamp boring into the dark, I picked my way half a mile along the sandy wash, strewn with pebbles and larger water-

rounded stones, to the place where we had found the figures days earlier. At the end of the canyon, the rock walls on either side soared up and leaned in, dense black silhouettes against a star-crowded sky (Figure 5).



Figure 5. The night sky above Black Dragon Canyon.

Putting down my cameras and tripod, I searched the wall with my headlamp for the figures we had seen, but my light was too weak and its beam too narrow. Except for the man-made fence, the whole area looked completely different than in the daylight, as if the canyon wall had been transmogrified by the dark. I took a few photographs of the stars, shutting off my light during each time exposure and listening to the night. Crickets

chirped nearby, their sound close on each side, soft and penetrating at the same time, echoing in the caverns of the rock walls. The air smelled sweet from the desert flowers and sage. Far away along Interstate 70 crossing the San Raphael Swell, came the occasional faint, grinding sound of a truck. Between the close and distant sounds lay a profound silence.

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After a while I stowed the camera equipment and sat on a boulder, deciding the time had come to open myself to what might exist in that long ago place, perhaps something from the ancient ones I knew were depicted in the dark of the sandstone beside me. For a long time I listened, alert, letting my imagination settle down, feeling the caressing air. The dark canyon seemed sweet and comforting, maternal. I felt tears come to my eyes. I felt a strange combination of sadness and blessing. The ancient spirits, whatever they had been, seemed there, nearby, all around in their absence, their gone-ness. Their voices seemed to have transformed into the companionable sounds of the crickets.

My ability to describe this fails beyond that. It was not at all what I had expected. It was the opposite of anything dramatic and spooky. I felt a serene and melancholy gratitude. I felt these people who knew the Earth, who had lived immersed in its mystery, were gone like my own mother and father were gone. The canyon was deeply empty of them. And yet in their absence they were keenly present in the insects and soft twittering night-notes of birds.

I know that Joe — engineer, photojournalist, deep-sea diver, car enthusiast, exquisite fine art photographer, born on the Cherokees' Tahlequah Reservation in Oklahoma and grounded in his Native American heritage — had a different experience. For him the spirits were still alive and present; “quick” was the word he later used. For me, I can only inadequately say what my experience was, on that night at least. I felt sharply that humanity had irretrievably lost something the Barrier Canyon people participated in, though at some level it must still live inside us. What that was

seemed compounded in the red dust and the stars and the soaring canyon walls, fashioned by millions of years. It had emerged in the impulse of a prehistoric artist or artists to paint those marvelously uncanny figures.

To this I would add another moment from that trip. A few days before we found Black Dragon Canyon, I was wandering in the morning along a stream bed in the high desert country of Needles National Park. The canyon wash was still purling thin threads of water from the recent spring rains. I sat down on a rock to rest. I had been thinking about this question of how humans might find some means of deeply reconnecting with the Earth. After a while I looked down to discover a red ant crawling along the seam of my trousers. Thinking he was a fire ant, I moved to flick him away. My first swipe brushed him. He wriggled and his face looked up at me. Then something happened. My second swipe was stronger, but too strong, so that my finger crushed and smeared him. In that instant before I killed him, I saw, as through a microscope, the ant hugely magnified, reaching out to me. Its being, its uniquely individual life, excruciatingly was present to me. I felt that the ant had its own personality, if I could put it that way, its own life experience. But my realization came too late. I had destroyed him. I felt wrenched and wretched, as if my own being had been pulled through a narrow stone crack into darkness.

A few minutes later, still stricken with the vividness of the ant's life and death, I looked to the slope of canyon rising up from the wash where I was walking. Near the top something seemed to be waving at me. It was pure white, phosphorescent among the rocks and

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vegetation around it on the steep incline that was otherwise deep in shadow: a bush burning — waving white light.



Figure 6. The waving bush. Needles National Park.

Of course, I was well aware of what caused this effect—morning sunlight angled precisely between the rocks on the ridge and making the bush's branches glow—and that the supernatural sight was not supernatural. Nevertheless, I felt an intimate relation to that distant burning bush, as if it were a being making a sign for my benefit. Usually, ratiocinating about real causes for some puzzling phenomenon is sufficient to dispel any uncanny impression the phenomenon may create. But that was not the case here. For over 20 minutes the burning bush remained in intimate relation with me, as the ant had.¹⁴ For the whole time it never dimmed, though it seemed to wave more slowly. Finally, I bowed to it and went back down the trail. The

morning's stroll down the wash had become uncannily alive and animated.

Inviting an Earth-centered Animism

If only we know, boss, what the stones and rain and flowers say. Maybe they call — call us — and we don't hear them. When will people's ears open, boss? When shall we have our eyes open to see? When shall we open our arms to embrace everything — the stones, rain, flowers and men? What d'you think about that, boss?

— Zorba the Greek

This was not the first time I have had experiences like these. While I remain skeptical about astrology, palmistry, and extraterrestrial visitations, I am hardly a facile denier of the occult and the supernatural either. I just know it is pretty easy for us to fool ourselves. I am certain that the universe is

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much richer and deeper than the very limited view of it taken by our reductionist, materialist science. That said, in the context of this present essay, I should point out that to the extent that ideas about the paranormal privilege human concerns, they are ideas that our anthropocentric consciousness likes to argue over and reach analytic conclusions about, while our Earth-embodied consciousness lives in a world which is magically unified to begin with.

So, while I generally judge my reality through the biases of scientifically testable ideas, I think it also makes sense to drop those biases and become an animist.

The word animism, from the Latin root for “breath, spirit, life,” was invented by scholars to categorize the belief that animals, plants and inanimate objects have a spiritual or vital essence. Over the years, I have learned to experience even apparently inanimate objects as having a life force that exists far beyond the pale of our limited reality-based definitions for them as other creatures or as lifeless matter. Over time I have become sensitized to the apparent life force and personality in many seemingly inanimate or unlikely things of this world, like rocks, clouds, and ants.

Becoming an animist is easy, though it may take a little time for adults to get used to the perspective shift. Children are naturally animists. They find beings they can speak to in all sorts of objects and creatures. We regularly animate (to make a word) our pets, talking to them as if their minds were human. Animism is a state of consciousness long familiar to artists and might be considered a

key component of an artist’s way of being. Poet John Keats (1817) wrote famously, “If a sparrow come before my window, I take part in its existence and pick about the gravel.”¹⁵

Fromm, in his 1959 essay *The Creative Attitude*, says that the artist

... has to give up holding on to himself as a thing and begin to experience himself only in the process of creative response; paradoxically enough, if he can experience himself in this process, he loses himself. He transcends the boundaries of his own person, and at the very moment when he feels “I am” he also feels “I am you,” I am one with the whole world. (p. 51)

In this vein, my mentor, the eminent landscape photographer Paul Caponigro, talks about the immanent feeling of *presence* in the subject of the photograph. This presence spurs him to take the picture in the first place and is the feeling he works to bring out in the final print so that others can experience it. He also humorously but ironically (or is it seriously?) attributes the uncanny luminous effects of his silver gelatin masterpieces to the effect of the faeries. These descriptions of the artist’s mindset suggest it is similar to the paradox (where the self both is and is not the Other; inside is and is not the outside) — the state of mind that Berman hypothesizes was the consciousness of our Paleolithic ancestors.

As a landscape photographer I regularly see personalities and moods in rocks and trees — in clouds especially (Figure 7).

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Figure 7. Clouds. Are they dead or alive?

As a creative writer, I regularly experience the natural world in terms of metaphor, irony, and personification. These tools, in different ways, challenge the idea of a separation between me and the other, even while at the same time they reaffirm that, yes, such separation exists. They create the paradox — a state of both “I am” and yet “I am not because I am you in being one with the world.”

Another way to describe the animist’s perspective is in terms of an important concept of art that can be described as the difference between meaning and meaningfulness. For the most part our anthropocentric consciousness is a shell encrusted with meanings, that is, in knowledge or in a process of acquiring knowledge. For that reason, your poetry teacher in high school asks you to tell the class

what a certain line in the poem means. Poets abhor this approach. It denies the poem, shuts it down, and poisons it. Poets write their lines to intimate and suggest, to be meaningful but never to be reducible to some trite little meaning or piece of knowledge that could be put on a multiple choice test. The very thing the poet is trying to say can only be hinted at; it lives as a tantalizing, unknowable mystery. In other words, artists are not playing games and cleverly hiding their meaning. What they’re talking about *cannot be explained and does not have meaning, at least in the sense that we usually mean*. In their own artistic contexts, music and painting are also about some vibrant mysterious vitality of the moment, the sense of some unknowable presence that Keats called “the spirit ditties of

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no tone.” A meaningfulness sailing liberated and free from the leaden anchors of meaning.

The ant, the burning bush, and the Barrier Canyon images brought this home to me. I could stop myself before trying to figure out what they *meant*. Weeks later, the intense meaningfulness — the unknowable presence — of my experiences in the canyons persisted.

The Proposal

That brings me to my proposal for creating new meaningfulness in our relationship with the Earth. Embracing animism, I am thinking, could be a way to engender meaningful experiences that would help re-embodiment us in the Earth: renew our ancient Earth mind. By becoming conscious animists we might recover some sense of the old Paleolithic connection to nature. Of course we would still carry on with that utilitarian and sometimes transcendental anthropocentric consciousness we are so deft at. But perhaps we could become like the poet, who lets an incomprehensible intuition decide when facing a choice of which word or image to use to convey what there are no word for. When it comes to important matters of our relationship with nature we could let our animistic perception rather than an anthropocentric logic guide us. Instead of listening solely to the ever-changing knowledge of science, we could begin to listen to the wisdom of the Earth embedded deeply within our minds and bodies.

Learning to be an animist is simple, even natural. We are born to it: mirror neurons and theory of mind; a brain constructed so that it can see faces in snowdrifts or wood grain.¹⁶ We imagine our cars have personalities. Farmers and gardeners talk to their plants. Can we bring this talent back to our relationships with the natural world, and then go into it more deeply? Can we commit ourselves to a willing suspension of disbelief? Can we for a moment, feel that that stone or that drop of rain sliding down the window is alive, experience that spider in its web is an individual with a character, as a being like us, as a being as close to us as a brother or sister?

Each distinct thing in the universe is infused with an absolutely unique manifestation of the life force that is also our life force. It exists separately and in its own right even as it is simultaneously inseparable from the whole (that is its primal paradox). We can each tune into such uniqueness and our previously hidden relationship with it.

Creative animism is not limited to single objects. Pause, if you will, on this photograph by Paul Caponigro (Figure 8) and experience the animate spirit — the mysterious vital mood — that was present for him in that moment. The animate spirit inhabits both the individual things in the scene and the scene as a whole.

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Figure 8. Paul Caponigro's portrait of spirits in Redding CT.

As you teach yourself to be a creative animist, you might try to tune into the unique life of particularly alien living beings: the single lobster in the tank at the restaurant, the clump of weeds in your yard, the dead tree trunk on a deserted house lot. Go a step or two beyond anthropomorphizing. This rock you hold is not your pet rock. Think of it as a rock with its own way of experiencing the Earth, its own special connections to the whole. It may be similar to you but it is also profoundly different from you. Try to tune into both its similarity and its difference.¹⁷ In my own experience, acknowledging the spirits and unique individualities of other things makes reality feel more expansive and immediate.¹⁸ The more I do it, the more I feel the natural world (which includes me) disclosing itself as the multidimensional, constantly evolving miracle that it is. When I do this, I feel my heart swing open. When the light changes on an object or vital scene, I feel a pang at the

passing away of the unique thing. And gratitude for its having been.

My co-author David Peat, in his 1996 book *Blackfoot Physics, Journey into the Native American Universe*, offers another insight into the workings of animism. Peat writes:

I can remember a Choctaw Elder, Mary Jones, speaking of her vision and telling me how she would speak to the rocks near her home. "The rocks are alive," she told me. Mary must have seen my scientist's mind starting to buzz because she looked at me for a moment and added, "But not every rock is alive."

A non-Native friend of mind had been told that while rocks are animate, not all of them are alive. "Well, which ones aren't alive?" he asked. "The ones that don't breathe,"

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was the reply. Another non-native, when asking if trees could speak was told, “Yes...er...that one can speak. And...er... that one, and ...er... that one over there.”

Our problem is that we are used to living in a world of objects, so when the question of animation comes up we immediately look at the rock, or try to discover whether it has special characteristics that make it alive. But in the Algonquin world, animation is the primary reality and the particular manifestations, the rocks, are less important.

Ignore These Objections

A human being is a part of the whole, called by us “Universe,” a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest — a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness... Not to nourish the delusion but to try to overcome it is the way to reach the attainable measure of peace of mind.

— Albert Einstein (1950)

Of course, I can just hear orthodox academic/scientific minds saying, “You are intentionally engaging in magical thinking”—and that is true. I know it’s magical thinking. Another way of saying this, is to say that animists are exercising their human capacity for imagination, empathy, and compassion, and these attributes of our consciousness are just as important for a sane sense of reality as our capacity for adhering to logic and causality. I am deliberately putting myself in the hands of the trickster in order to glimpse a deeper truth, which to the logical or doctrinaire mind is ambiguous at best—the kind of deep truth that has always been the wellspring of art.

Ironically, our human talent for animizing has long been co-opted by commerce to turn a profit. Think of the front end of an SUV designed to look like the face of a monster that can protect its owner from anything else on the road; animated golf-club-carrying ants interrupted on the links by a giant take-charge-terminator spray can of insecticide; the plasticine voice of the personal assistant in your smartphone. Our capacity for animism routinely grafts human emotions onto our anthropocene objects. More ironically, we have developed our anthropocentric consciousness to the place where we are inclined to see the real creatures and features of the Earth as if they are dead or abstract (resources) and to respond to the artificial creatures of our fabricated reality (i.e., products) as if they are alive.

By contrast, when we focus on the others in our natural surroundings, we focus on beings that evolved within the context of the same whole Earth environment that we evolved in. These objects and beings (our relations) are light-years different from the invented objects that have popped up recently out of our fragmented, anthropocentrically focused human brains.

Trying to feel the being of a natural thing, a mineral, a cloud, or an ant, is an act of the imagination and arguably something else: imagination freed of its bondage to human stories and human needs. This is an Earth-centered animism.

In any case, though reductionist scientists would be hard-put to agree, science itself with all its logic, analysis, double-blind, repeatable experiments, and separation of observer from observed is a form of magical thinking, too.

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Immanuel Kant, the German philosopher credited with having set down the metaphysical framework for science, observed that all we can know about the world is what we can perceive with our senses and deduce from our logic working on the account of our senses. We see the world through the filter(s) of our brain. Meanwhile, Kant points out, the thing-in-itself, the *ding an sich*, that lies beyond our mental filters must remain a mystery. Kant's narrative leaves unclear whether he is referring to this mystery of the thing-in-itself in the singular (the inaccessible reality of one-giant-whole-in-itself), or in the plural (a reality made of many inscrutable things-in-themselves). Key components of our brain-filter are quantity, time, space, and causality, Kant reasoned.

The universe seems to us composed of causes and effects which it is the scientist's role to analyze and sort out. Our capacity for reason and knowledge is founded on our brain's built-in and built-up assumptions about cause and effect. But conservative science and our anthropocentric consciousness seem largely to have forgotten Kant's caveat about knowledge, that it is inherently limited, with the *ding an sich* out there somewhere inaccessibly beyond it.¹⁹

Scientists too often give the impression that the causes and effects we know about or can deduce are the same things as the *ding an sich*. And then along comes quantum mechanics, with its strange paradoxes, and entanglement of observer and observed, and Chaos with its paradoxical determinism, unpredictability, and its holism where everything is causing everything else. And then along come the neurologists, such as Metzinger (2009), pointing out that "the temporal inwardness of

the conscious *Now* is an illusion. There *is* no immediate contact with reality." These scientific conundrums tell us that the *ding an sich* (both singular and plural) is still buzzing out there in the dark, while scientists (some of them, anyway) are magically imagining it is not: That is, they are magically imagining the complete thing-in-itself must be just pieces of knowledge they do not yet have, meanings they have not yet networked. Meanwhile, our Pleistocene animist ancestors undoubtedly knew — and artists certainly have always known — that the right response to life is not just to accumulate meaning, but to celebrate the mysterious ever-present meaningfulness that surpasses our constructed meanings.²⁰

Re-awakening Our Earth Mind: Our Earth-Embodied Mode of Consciousness

Chinese woodsmen of the T'ang and S'ung dynasties — in obedience to the Taoist philosophy of continuity of nature between human and other species — would bow to the trees which they felled, and offer a promise that the trees would be used well, in buildings that would dignify the wood once it had become timber.

— Robert Macfarlane (2007)

I am reminded of a story my friend John Nance told me years ago. John had written a wonderful book about the so-called "stone age" Tasaday people, who Asian anthropologists believe lived for some 600 years as a small Paleolithic band of about 30 individuals in the dense rainforest of the Philippine island of Mindanao until emerging to greet the modern world in 1972. John had been hired by the US Forest service to talk to a workshop of forest rangers about the Tasaday experience of living totally immersed in the jungle. John said that one of the Forest Service tasks for rangers was to select the

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trees to be cut for timber, and the person running the workshop started off by asking rangers there how they felt about this task.

The rangers' answers were uniformly blazé, John said; it was just a job they had to do. They felt neither one way nor the other. The workshop leader then gave the rangers an exercise: They were to go into the woods, each pick a tree and spend the day and night in the tree's company. The next day they were to come back to the workshop and report what they found using whatever means they wanted to convey the experience: drawings, journal entries, poetry, or other.

John said that when the rangers returned the next day the workshop leader asked them again how they felt about the task of marking trees for cutting. Now, all reported they had been deeply moved by their time spent with their single tree, and they realized they would have a hard time designating it to be taken. John said the reports given by these tough, professional woodsmen about their time with their trees were exceptionally moving. After the workshop was over, they would still have the job of marking the trees for timber, but that now they could treat this task as what it was — a life and death situation.

The forestland rangers were in something like the position of hunter-gatherers who understand they must listen carefully to the plants before gathering them, learning which ones are ready to give their lives so that their fellow beings might survive.

It seems reasonable to propose that humans have a natural propensity for an Earth-embodied mode of consciousness as well as for the anthropocentric mode that now almost

completely dominates our thinking. Think of these two modes as large-scale terms in our existential primal paradox, one mode self oriented, the other solidarity oriented. I believe that if we could reawaken our Earth-embodied mode of mind, a creative tension between these two kinds of consciousness might emerge to discover new principles of balance for our lives as human beings upon this Earth.

As I said, becoming an animist is simple, quite natural, and noticing and embracing our non-human relations can do no harm that I can see. It might even do some good. In my case, I know that it personally makes me feel less isolated in my approaching death. It makes me more respectful of things of this world, less in haste, more empathetic and compassionate.

I envision that if enough of us could exercise our natural creativity by becoming animists — each in his and her own way (and remember, it does not require a special revelation or talent we all do not already have) — we might as a species re-embodiment ourselves in the Earth. What that might lead to we cannot predict.²¹

Perhaps a more peaceful state of mind like the one from Leslie Marmon Silko's (2012) story "Lullaby" found in her book, *Storyteller*:

*The earth is your mother,
 she holds you.*

*The sky is your father,
 he protects you.*

*Sleep,
 sleep.*

*We are together always
 We are together always
 There never was a time
 when this
 was not so.*²²

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Footnotes

¹ It's obviously possible to parse the fluidity of consciousness in many ways: the unconscious, the preconscious, hypnagogic consciousness, altered states of consciousness. The Buddhists have catalogued countless numbers of distinct states. The states often overlap and blend into each other. I'm advisedly using the expression "mode" of consciousness here as a nontechnical term to designate a general orientation of consciousness — how through this general mode the body-mind experiences and interacts with the quotidian reality. Further note: the word "reality" comes from the Latin *res*, which means "thing." Our perception of reality as made of separate things is therefore part and parcel of what I'm calling an anthropocentric mode of perception and mind.

² Rene Descartes thought of the body as a thing extended in space and the mind as non-extended. He was wrong. We now know that body-mind constitutes an inescapably unified reality akin to the way space and time compose a unified reality that Einstein dubbed the space-time continuum.

³ From Joseph Conrad's preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus*.

⁴ Of course, we should acknowledge that the Pope himself heads a religion that is anthropocentric throughout. His pointing out to a little girl that animals have souls can be seen as one of his creative efforts to ameliorate, even break free, of the human-centered view that dominates Church dogma — and the dogma of probably every other world religion. This is not a criticism of the Catholic Church or religiosity. Like a growth hormone that has leaked into the environment, our anthropocentric concern for our own importance, salvation and destiny now shows up almost everywhere in our thinking.

⁵ A recently published book (Curtin, 2015) points out that the creation of human free reserves has led to rapid degradation of those reserves, suggesting that just leaving nature alone is not the answer. The Masai people with their grazing herds and deep concern for the land, kept the large area of Kenya's Amboseli National Park healthy until they were shut out by authorities steeped in ideas about the scientific management of nature. The view that humans are separate from nature is an anthropocentric, subject/object view. It turns out we can't just leave nature alone as if it were something external to us.

⁶ We commonly translate this into a patronizing admiration for that "simple" society's commitment to "sustainability." Sustainability is the obvious result of such practices, but our characterization misses the crucial point. The plants and animals, and even rocks, are experienced as fellow beings, not as objects in a sustainable economy. These fellow beings share the miracle of life and are inseparably woven into one's own being.

⁷ I've varied Harari's comparison somewhat.

⁸ A number of Native American languages, including Apache, Navaho and Mohawk, are verb-based languages rather than noun-based like the languages of hegemonic civilizations. That tells us something about the differences in worldview. Nouns refer to things that are fixed, things that can be possessed or dominated. Verbs convey reality as movement, flow, and change: a reality of fluid *non-parts* and *not-things*.

⁹ In his two previous books, *The Re-enchantment of the World* and *Coming to Our Senses*, Berman explores with great insight the psychology of disembodied consciousness that has occurred in the hegemonic civilized world over the last few thousand years. Describing the distortions of our human way of being that follow from this disembodiment and loss of wonder, Berman tells a frightening story of how anthropocentric consciousness has sucked the life out of nature.

¹⁰ See the spring 2015 of *About Place Journal* of the Black Earth Institute devoted to the topic of the Primal Paradox. <http://aboutplacejournal.org/primal-paradox/>

¹¹ In works of art this dynamic tension shows up in what Piet Mondrian calls the "individual-universal equation," the artist's depiction of a particular situation that nonetheless has universal significance. None of us is King Lear, for example, but anyone can deeply identify with Shakespeare's account of Lear's particular tragedy.

¹² There is growing recognition that we have made ourselves ill by starving our consciousness of nature. The January 2016 issue of *National Geographic* reviewed some of the research showing the deeply positive effects of immersing oneself in natural environments: an increase in creativity, decrease in stress hormones, boosts in heart and metabolic rates, moderation of violent impulses, and so on. South Korea now has health rangers who work in designated healing forests. One Korean social scientist says that human well being is a formal goal of the nation's forest plan. In other words, the research discovers our embodiment in nature and then promptly uses the discovery to reinforce the anthropocentric view by conceptualizing a forest something humans are able use like a drug for their benefit. The article also points out that research subjects monitored for fMRI while they being shown images of natural scenes "lit up the anterior cingulate and the insula — areas associated with empathy and altruism. Maybe nature makes us nicer as well as calmer." Perhaps here we can see the faintest shadow of a less selfish thing that might happen to us if we could awaken an Earth-embodied consciousness.

¹³ Apparently some 70 years ago, well meaning preservationists outlined many of the Barrier Canyon images in chalk, disfiguring them in response to their fear that viewers would not be able to make out the faded outlines. Using Photoshop, I carefully removed most of the chalk from this particular pair. In general, the Barrier Canyon images found in this and other canyons have a distinctly spooky quality that has elicited contending anthropocentric ideas about their purpose. The so-called black dragon image that gives the canyon its name (you can look it up on the internet) has been interpreted by creationists as a dinosaur-bird that proves humans and dinosaurs lived at the same time. Other figures such as the ones shown above have been interpreted by ancient alien enthusiasts as depicting extraterrestrial travelers in space suits. Recently, the black dragon (the apparent bird-dinosaur) image was photographed allegedly using a new penetrating technology that seems to reveal the bird as several different figures, equally spooky. It is probably safe to say that Barrier Canyon figures act like tricksters that now prey on our knowledge-driven anthropocentric consciousness. And who is to say that that was not some aspect of their original purpose?

¹⁴ Please note, I do NOT draw the lesson from this experience that we should never kill ants. That is too simple and formulaic; it's an anthropocentric answer to a much deeper question, a question we may not even be able to ask.

¹⁵ John Keats Letter to Benjamin Bailey, November 22, 1817.

¹⁶ Gregory Cajete points out in his book on indigenous attitudes toward nature that "'animism' is a basic human trait common to both Indigenous and modern sensibilities (2000, p 27). Indeed, all humans are animists." He goes on, "Likewise, it may be said that we all use the metaphoric mind to describe, imagine, and create from the animate world with which we constantly participate."

¹⁷ This takes us into the realm of the metaphor. The tension between similarity and difference in the contradictory but unified X and Y terms of a metaphor kicks out some of the bars in the cage of logic and knowledge that imprisons our minds.

¹⁸ Very different from the narrow and enclosed feeling that my consciousness has, say, when I am driving a car, doing the bills, talking on the telephone, working at the office.

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¹⁹ Kant's position seems indisputable to me. If you start with the anthropocentric assumption that the human mind is separate from the external reality it thinks about, then you are stuck with the inevitable mystery and inaccessibility of that external *ding an sich* as it would be seen without your filters. At that point you will need God, or some equally fundamental idea like string theory or the big bang if you want to be able to think that the *ding an sich* is *not* really a mystery because, you argue, each thing is a jigsaw piece in a causal construction you call the universe. But then a nasty question raises its head: what is the being-in-itself of the universe beyond your chain of causality?

²⁰ For all we know, the perception of a rock as a spirit that is related to us may be closer to a perception of the *ding an sich* than any scientific explanation of a rock. Which is not to say that the scientific explanation is not amazing in its own right.

²¹ As an earth-embodied awakening, animism suits my consciousness, crafted as it was by the particular anthropocentric context I grew up in. But there are certainly other ways that could facilitate re-embodiment. One might, for example, borrow from the Native American ritual of the vision quest, focusing the individual quest on experiencing the quester's embodiment in nature.

²² Years ago, David Shainberg, one of the pioneers of consciousness studies, described what such a profound shift might look like if it were formulated in the abstract language of anthropocentric consciousness: "The creative process of forming connections and appreciating varieties of connections in the universe suggest that our beliefs about consciousness reflecting 'reality' needs still more decentralization. That is to say, we need to question more deeply our basic assumptions about what reality is and what place this reality has in the flow of the total field. This questioning may approach an ultimate reduction of what is left of Man's egocentricity. Just as the physicist comes to realize that quanta are temporary deductions that an energy field exists, so we may come to know consciousness itself is merely a temporary delineation of a temporary form" (Shainberg, 1974).

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